which implementation of this Act by the State Governments is one of the main issues under review, it would not be advisable to amend the Act for the time being.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has already initiated several measures to streamline the procedures to cut short the delay, which has resulted in expeditious decision on the proposals at the Central Government level. However, State/UT Governments have also important role to play in the effective implementation of the Act including faster clearances. In the past few months, meetings have been held with the Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa at the highest level where it has emerged that considerable delay is occurring at the State Government level. The matter has been taken up with all State/UT Governments to simplify their procedure for processing and submission of the proposals to the Central Government and early compliance of the stipulated conditions.

Tiger gift by Zoo authorities

670. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether as reported in the Indian Express dated the 24th April, 2001, under the caption, "No beastly tales at Chhatbir, here tigers are simply gifted away", since the start of the year, 2000, nearly ten tigers have been killed in and out of captivity;

(b) if so, what was the tiger population in India as per last three census and how far the report about killing of tigers is correct; and

(c) whether the tigers are gifted by the Zoo authorities to anybody who will have them; if so, the details of the practices in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The news item published in the Indian Express dated 24-4-2001 under the caption, "No beastly tales at Chhatbir, here tigers are simply gifted away" has referred to the killing of nearly 100 tigers since the start of the year 2000. During the year 2000, 55 tigers have died in zoos and about 39 tigers have been killed in

and around the forest areas. Thus, about 94 tigers have died during the year 2000. The tiger population in the country as per the last 3 census is as follows:—

S.No.	Census Year	No. of Tiger in Wild
1.	1989	4334
2.	1993	3750
3.	1997	3836

(c) Wild animals are on the negative list of your export policy and therefore, export of wild animals is normally allowed only from zoo to zoo on exchange basis. Although, capture of tigers from the wild for display in zoos is totally prohibited, some wild tigers are always received as rescued animals. In view of the genetic importance, these animals are not allowed for export. Zoo to zoo exchange is allowed in respect of captive breed tigers only. As far as diplomatic gifts are concerned, guidelines issued by International Union for Conservation of Nature are strictly adhered to. It is also ensured that the recipient country has appropriate housing and upkeep facilities. Chhatbir zoo from where tigers have been gifted in the instant case, had 29 tigers in their stock. Gift of two tigers to Tripoli Zoo in Libya in no way hamper their conservation programme.

Tiger Population

671. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the census has shown the tiger population to be around 4,500;

(b) whether it is also a fact that according to census the actual tiger population is less than 800;

(c) if so, what is the actual tiger population; and

(d) what are the reasons for variation?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) According to the reports received from the State Governments the tiger population in the country is estimated to be around 3800.